



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

September 26, 2006

H.R. 5313 **Open Spaces and Farmland Preservation Act**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Agriculture on September 21, 2006

H.R. 5313 would reserve at least 15 percent of the amounts made available to the Secretary of Agriculture for the farmland protection program to fund challenge grants to encourage the purchase of conservation easements and other interests in land to be held by a state agency, county, or other eligible entity. CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 5313 would have no significant impact on the budget because designating certain funds for the farmland protection program to be used for grants would not change the cost of this program.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-171) appropriated \$97 million for the farmland protection program for fiscal year 2007. Under current law, funding for the program expires at the end of 2007. However, as specified in section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Energy Deficit Control Act, CBO's baseline assumes that this amount of funding will be provided in each subsequent year. Hence, the bill would reserve at least \$15 million each year for challenge grants.

H.R. 5313 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. State and local participation in this program would be voluntary, as would any costs those governments might incur to provide matching funds and meet other program requirements.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Jim Langley. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.